



# Grade 8 Mathematics

## Student At-Home Activity Packet 1

This At-Home Activity Packet includes 10 sets of practice problems that align to important math concepts your student has worked with so far this year.

We recommend that your student completes one page of practice problems each day.

Encourage your student to do the best they can with this content—the most important thing is that they continue developing their mathematical fluency and skills!

See the Grade 8 Math  
concepts covered in  
this packet!



# Applying Properties for Powers with the Same Base

► Rewrite each expression as a single power.

1  $6^4 \cdot 6^4$

\_\_\_\_\_

2  $(-5^5)^2$

\_\_\_\_\_

3  $\frac{2^9}{2^5}$

\_\_\_\_\_

4  $3 \cdot 3 \cdot 3 \cdot 3 \cdot 3^2$

\_\_\_\_\_

5  $\frac{12^5 \cdot 12^7}{-12^4}$

\_\_\_\_\_

6  $\left(\frac{7^5}{7^2}\right)^2$

\_\_\_\_\_

► Evaluate each expression.

7  $\frac{4^8}{4^5}$

\_\_\_\_\_

8  $(-10) \cdot (-10)^4$

\_\_\_\_\_

9  $\left(\frac{(-3)^4}{(-3)^2}\right)^3$

\_\_\_\_\_

► What value of  $x$  makes the equation true?

10  $\frac{8^x}{8^5} = 8^7$

\_\_\_\_\_

11  $(-11)^x \cdot (-11)^4 = \frac{(-11)^{10}}{(-11)^3}$

\_\_\_\_\_

12  $(6^x)^{10} = \frac{(6^{12})^2}{6^4}$

\_\_\_\_\_

13 Explain how you solved for  $x$  in problem 12.

# Applying Properties for Powers with the Same Exponent

► Rewrite each expression as a single power.

1  $9^4 \cdot 10^4$

\_\_\_\_\_

2  $(12 \cdot 6)^3$

\_\_\_\_\_

3  $\frac{3^3}{2^3}$

\_\_\_\_\_

4  $\frac{6^2}{2^2}$

\_\_\_\_\_

5  $(-5)^6 \cdot (-7)^6$

\_\_\_\_\_

6  $\left(\frac{6^4}{12^4}\right)^2$

\_\_\_\_\_

► Rewrite each expression as a product of two powers or quotient of two powers.

7  $5^5(16^2 \cdot 5^3)^3$

\_\_\_\_\_

8  $\left(\frac{8^4 \cdot 5^3}{8^5}\right)^2$

\_\_\_\_\_

9  $\left(\frac{5^8 \cdot 3^7}{5^4}\right)^{10}$

\_\_\_\_\_

- 10 How does multiplying powers with the same base differ from multiplying powers with the same exponent but different bases?

# Applying Properties of Negative Exponents

- Rewrite each expression using only positive exponents. The answers are mixed up at the bottom of the page. Cross out the answers as you complete the problems.

1  $7^3 \cdot 16^{-9}$

2  $\frac{8^{-6}}{21^{-4}}$

3  $\left(\frac{7}{16}\right)^{-3}$

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4  $16^3 \cdot (-7)^{-3}$

5  $(8 \cdot 21)^{-4}$

6  $8 \cdot 21^{-3}$

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7  $\frac{11^{-7} \cdot 5^9}{6^9}$

8  $\frac{11^{-7} \cdot 5^9}{6^{-9}}$

9  $6^9 \cdot 11^{-7} \cdot 5^{-9}$

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10  $\frac{3^5 \cdot (-4)^{-10}}{7^9 \cdot 21^{-4}}$

11  $\frac{(-21)^{-4} \cdot (-4)^0}{3^{-5} \cdot 7^{-9}}$

12  $\left(\frac{3}{7}\right)^{-5} \cdot (-21)^{-4} \cdot (-4)^2$

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Answers

$$\frac{1}{(8 \cdot 21)^4}$$

$$\frac{6^9}{11^7 \cdot 5^9}$$

$$\frac{16^3}{7^3}$$

$$\frac{7^5 \cdot (-4)^2}{3^5 \cdot (-21)^4}$$

$$\frac{21^4}{8^6}$$

$$\frac{6^9 \cdot 5^9}{11^7}$$

$$\frac{16^3}{(-7)^3}$$

$$\frac{3^5 \cdot 21^4}{7^9 \cdot (-4)^{10}}$$

$$\frac{3^5 \cdot 7^2}{(-21)^4}$$

$$\frac{8}{21^3}$$

$$\frac{5^9}{11^7 \cdot 6^9}$$

$$\frac{7^3}{16^9}$$

# Applying Properties of Integer Exponents

► Evaluate each expression.

1  $18^{-4} \cdot 6^7$

\_\_\_\_\_

2  $3^4 \cdot 3^{-6} \cdot 9^0$

\_\_\_\_\_

3  $\left(\frac{3^{-4} \cdot 3^6}{6^3 \cdot 6^{-1}}\right)^{-2}$

\_\_\_\_\_

► Write each expression using only positive exponents.

4  $19^{-3} \cdot 19 \cdot 19^{-4} \cdot 19^3$

\_\_\_\_\_

5  $\frac{6^{-3} \cdot 17^3 \cdot 2}{6^5 \cdot 17^{-4} \cdot 2^{-1}}$

\_\_\_\_\_

6  $24^{-3} \cdot 24^7 \cdot (24^{-3})^4 \cdot 24^9$

\_\_\_\_\_

7  $\left(\frac{7^{-3} \cdot 3^{-8}}{7^{-2} \cdot 3^{-2}}\right)^{-4}$

\_\_\_\_\_

8  $(2^{-1} \cdot 3^0)^{-3} \cdot (2^0 \cdot 5^3)^5$

\_\_\_\_\_

9  $\left(\frac{5^6 \cdot 3^{-3}}{3^{-3}}\right)^4$

\_\_\_\_\_

10 How could you have simplified problem 7 in a different way?

# Writing Numbers in Scientific Notation

► Write each number in scientific notation.

1 8

\_\_\_\_\_

2 54

\_\_\_\_\_

3 0.02

\_\_\_\_\_

4 229

\_\_\_\_\_

5 187

\_\_\_\_\_

6 0.452

\_\_\_\_\_

7 0.006009

\_\_\_\_\_

8 452

\_\_\_\_\_

9 35,710

\_\_\_\_\_

10 0.00005026

\_\_\_\_\_

11 787,000

\_\_\_\_\_

12 45.2

\_\_\_\_\_

13  $934\frac{1}{2}$

\_\_\_\_\_

14 0.000000452

\_\_\_\_\_

15 11,235,000,000

\_\_\_\_\_

16 How are the answers to problems 6, 8, 12, and 14 similar? How are they different?

# Adding and Subtracting with Scientific Notation

► Find each sum or difference. Write your answer in scientific notation.

1  $(6 \times 10^1) + (9 \times 10^1)$

\_\_\_\_\_

2  $32 - (2.1 \times 10^1)$

\_\_\_\_\_

3  $(7 \times 10^0) + (3 \times 10^1)$

\_\_\_\_\_

4  $100 - (1.4 \times 10^1)$

\_\_\_\_\_

5  $(8.8 \times 10^2) + (3 \times 10^2)$

\_\_\_\_\_

6  $(3.05 \times 10^2) + 64$

\_\_\_\_\_

# Adding and Subtracting with Scientific Notation *continued*

7  $(4 \times 10^2) + 120.5$

---

8  $(2.75 \times 10^3) - 100$

---

9  $(9.5 \times 10^2) - (4.3 \times 10^1)$

---

10  $18 - (2 \times 10^{-1})$

---

11  $0.071 + (6 \times 10^{-2})$

---

12  $2,000 + (8 \times 10^3)$

---

- 13 When adding or subtracting with scientific notation, why is it important to have the same power of 10?



# Multiplying and Dividing with Scientific Notation

► Find each product or quotient. Write your answer in scientific notation.

1  $(3.6 \times 10^1) \div 6$

\_\_\_\_\_

2  $(2 \times 10^2) \times (3 \times 10^1)$

\_\_\_\_\_

3  $7 \times (2 \times 10^1)$

\_\_\_\_\_

4  $(2.5 \times 10^0) \times (1.5 \times 10^1)$

\_\_\_\_\_

5  $(4 \times 10^2) \div (4 \times 10^1)$

\_\_\_\_\_

6  $45 \div (5 \times 10^0)$

\_\_\_\_\_

## Multiplying and Dividing with Scientific Notation *continued*

7  $(2.5 \times 10^2) \times 5$

---

8  $900 \div (4.5 \times 10^0)$

---

9  $(4 \times 10^5) \times 0.0375$

---

10  $(6 \times 10^{-10}) \div (2.5 \times 10^{-12})$

---

11  $(2.8 \times 10^{-7}) \times (7 \times 10^{12})$

---

12  $0.000068 \div (2 \times 10^8)$

---

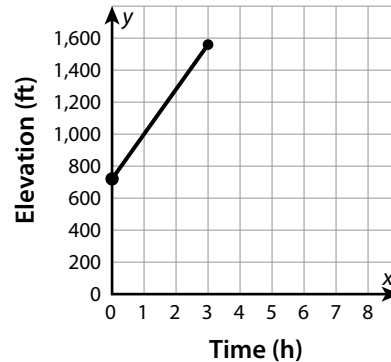
13 How do you divide two numbers in scientific notation?

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# Interpreting a Linear Function

► Interpret the linear function to solve the problems. Show your work.

- 1 A group of volunteers is spending a week cleaning up the trails in the Hudson Highlands. On day 2 the volunteers begin at the point on the trail where they ended the day before. The graph shows their elevation, in feet, as a function of the number of hours they work to clean the trails.



- a. What does the ordered pair (1, 1000) on the graph represent?
- b. The graph begins at 720 on the y-axis. What does this value represent? Is this the rate of change or the initial value?
- c. By how many feet does the elevation increase for one hour of work? What does this value represent, rate of change or initial value?
- d. What is the equation that represents this function?

- 2 The table shows number of people as a function of time in hours. Write an equation for the function and describe a situation that it could represent. Include the initial value, rate of change, and what each quantity represents in the situation.

Hours	Number of People
1	150
3	250
5	350

## Interpreting a Linear Function *continued*

- 3** Amber plans to cook a turkey and macaroni and cheese for a special dinner. Since she will need to use the oven for both dishes, and they won't both fit in the oven at the same time, she has to determine how much time all the cooking will take. The macaroni and cheese will take a set amount of time, while the turkey takes a certain number of minutes per pound that the turkey weighs.

The equation models the total cooking time Amber will need to prepare her dishes.

$$y = 15x + 40$$

- a.** What do variables  $x$  and  $y$  represent? Use the phrase *is a function of* to describe how the two quantities relate to each other.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- b.** What does the value 40 represent?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- c.** What does the rate of change represent?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- d.** What is the total cooking time for just the turkey if it weighs 12 pounds? How do you know?

# Writing an Equation for a Linear Function from a Verbal Description

► Write an equation for each linear function described. Show your work.

- 1 The graph of the function passes through the point  $(2, 1)$ , and  $y$  increases by 4 when  $x$  increases by 1.
- 2 the function with a rate of change of  $\frac{3}{2}$  whose graph passes through the point  $(4, 10.5)$
- 3 the function with a rate of change of  $\frac{4}{5}$  that has a value of 10 at  $x = 10$
- 4 the function that has an  $x$ -intercept of  $-2$  and a  $y$ -intercept of  $-\frac{2}{3}$
- 5 Cameron stops to get gas soon after beginning a road trip. He checks his distance from home 2 hours after filling his gas tank and checks again 3 hours later. The first time he checked, he was 170 miles from home. The second time, he was 365 miles from home. What equation models Cameron's distance from home as a function of the time since getting gas?
- 6 A charity organization is holding a benefit event. It receives \$28,000 in donations and \$225 for each ticket sold for the event. What equation models the total amount earned from the event as a function of the number of tickets sold?

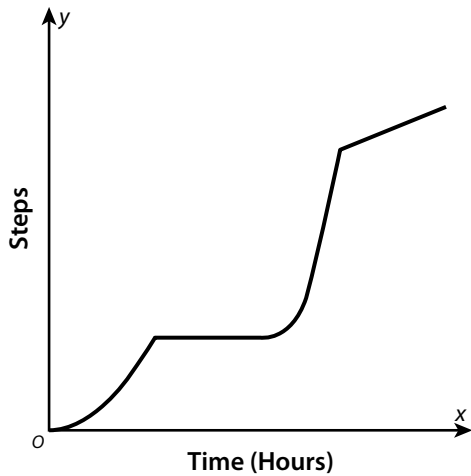
## Writing an Equation for a Linear Function from a Verbal Description *continued*

- 7** The same charity organization from problem 6 has to pay \$4,700 for the banquet hall as well as \$110 per plate for each ticket sold.
- What equation models the total amount spent as a function of the number of tickets sold?
  - Using your answer from problem 6, write an equation for the charity's profit as a function of ticket sales. (profit = amount earned – amount spent)
- 8** A school pays \$1,825 for 150 shirts. This includes the \$25 flat-rate shipping cost.
- What equation models the total cost as a function of the number of T-shirts ordered?
  - What does each variable represent?
  - What are the initial value and rate of change of the function? What does each one represent?

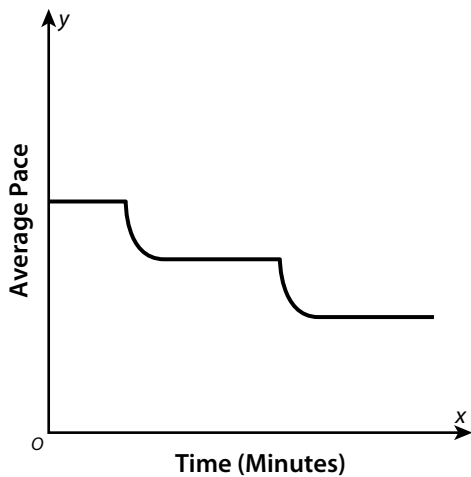
# Using Graphs to Describe Functions Qualitatively

► Tell a story that could be represented by the graph shown.

- 1 The graph represents steps taken as a function of time.

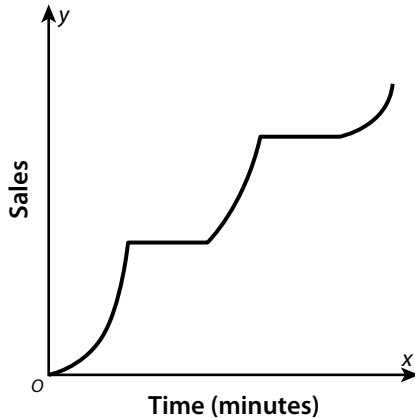


- 2 The graph represents average pace as a function of time.

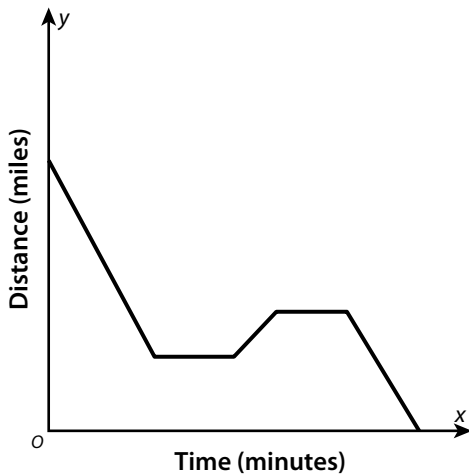


## Using Graphs to Describe Functions Qualitatively *continued*

- 3 The graph shows sales as a function of time.



- 4 The graph shows distance as a function of time.



- 5 For an interval on a graph that shows that a change is happening, explain how the shape of the graph on that interval tells you whether the change is happening gradually or quickly.





# Grade 8 Reading

## Student At-Home Activity Packet 1

This At-Home Activity Packet includes Section 1, with approximately 10 lessons in it. We recommend that your student complete one lesson each day.

Most lessons can be completed independently. However, there are some lessons that would benefit from the support of an adult. If there is not an adult available to help, don't worry! Just skip those lessons.

Encourage your student to do the best they can with this content. The most important thing is that they continue to work on their reading!

Flip to see the Grade 8  
Reading activities  
included in this packet!



## Lesson 7

## Active and Passive Voice



## Introduction

Sentences can be stated in the active voice or the passive voice.

- In the **active voice**, the subject of the sentence clearly *performs* the action.

**subject**    **action**  
 [Maddy] won the All-Around Student Achievement Contest.

- In the **passive voice**, the subject *receives* the action expressed by the verb. The verb consists of a form of the helping verb *be* plus the past participle of the main verb.

**subject**                      **helping verb**    **past participle**  
 The [All-Around Student Achievement Contest] was won by Maddy.

- In the passive-voice sentence example, the subject of the sentence changed, but the overall meaning did not. Maddy performed the action of winning, but she was not the subject. The contest, which was the direct object of the action in the first sentence, is the subject of the second sentence.



## Guided Practice

**Underline the simple subject in each sentence. Then write A for active or P for passive to identify the voice of each sentence.**

## Hint

In the passive voice, the person who performs the action isn't always identified.

## Example:

The award will be presented on Friday. The sentence doesn't tell *who* will present the award. *Award* is the simple subject, but it doesn't perform the action.

- Maddy is considered one of the best writers in school. \_\_\_\_\_
- She writes amazing articles for the school newspaper. \_\_\_\_\_
- Her report on ways to reduce waste in the cafeteria was chosen as Article of the Year. \_\_\_\_\_
- This year's spring play was also written by Maddy. \_\_\_\_\_
- The eighth grader even excels in math and science. \_\_\_\_\_
- Last year, she received a chance to go to Science Camp in Washington, DC. \_\_\_\_\_
- Camp applications were distributed to all students. \_\_\_\_\_
- Many students took advantage of the opportunity and applied. \_\_\_\_\_



## Independent Practice

**For numbers 1 and 2, which is the best way to change the voice in each sentence from active to passive without changing the meaning?**

- 1** The committee chose three students to attend Science Camp.
- A** Science Camp was chosen for three students to attend.
  - B** Three students were chosen by the committee to attend Science Camp.
  - C** Science Camp was chosen for three students by the committee.
  - D** Three students who attended Science Camp were chosen by the committee.

- 2** The Science Camp sent the students a letter of acceptance.
- A** The Science Camp was sent a letter of acceptance for the students.
  - B** A letter of acceptance to the students was received from the Science Camp.
  - C** A letter of acceptance was received by the Science Camp for the students.
  - D** The students were sent a letter of acceptance by the Science Camp.

### Answer Form

1 (A) (B) (C) (D)

2 (A) (B) (C) (D)

3 (A) (B) (C) (D)

4 (A) (B) (C) (D)

**Number  
Correct**

**4**

**For numbers 3 and 4, which is the best way to change the voice in each sentence from passive to active without changing the meaning?**

- 3** Music Camp was applied to by more students than to Drama Camp this year.
- A** More students applied to Music Camp than to Drama Camp this year.
  - B** More students will apply to Music Camp than to Drama Camp this year.
  - C** More students applied to Drama Camp than to Music Camp this year.
  - D** Music Camp had more students apply to it than to Drama Camp this year.

- 4** Maddy, a smart and friendly girl, is liked by everyone.
- A** Maddy, a smart and friendly girl, will be liked by everyone.
  - B** Maddy, who is a smart and friendly girl, likes everyone.
  - C** Everyone likes Maddy, a smart and friendly girl.
  - D** Everyone is liked by Maddy, a smart and friendly girl.

## Lesson 13

# Using Context Clues



### Introduction

Sometimes as you read, you may come to a word or a phrase that you don't understand. Often, you can determine the meaning of an unfamiliar word from its context, the words and sentences around it.

- Different kinds of context clues help readers figure out the meanings of words.

Context Clue	Signal Words	Example
Definition	<i>is, or, which is, means</i>	The land pulls in opposite directions along a <u>fault</u> , which is a crack in the earth's crust.
Example	<i>for example, for instance, such as</i>	Geoscientists, such as geologists and seismologists, study earthquakes.
Comparison	<i>like, similar, also, as well</i>	Like a large earthquake, smaller <u>seismic</u> events may also be destructive.
Contrast	<i>but, or, yet, in spite of, however, whereas, although</i>	In spite of the chaos caused by an earthquake, order is eventually restored.

- A word's position and function in a sentence can also be a clue to its meaning. What is the meaning of *geometrogomy* in this sentence?

Scientists measure the geometrogomy of earthquakes.

*Geometrogomy* isn't a real word! But if it were, you could figure out something about its meaning from its use in the sentence. Since it comes after the word *the*, you know that *geometrogomy* is a noun. And because of its use in the sentence, you also know that it is probably an observable "thing"—something scientists can measure.



### Guided Practice

**Underline the context clue that can help you figure out the meaning of each underlined word or phrase. Write the meaning on a separate piece of paper.**

#### Hint

A context clue is often in the same sentence as an unfamiliar word. The clue may also be in a sentence that comes before or after the sentence that includes the difficult word.

Before they strike land, tornadoes can often be detected by Doppler radar, an electronic system that measures wind speeds. A tornado begins when a wind system forms a huge vortex. This formation is similar to water swirling toward a drain. This condition may trigger multiple tornadoes, which may occur simultaneously or one after the other. Whereas many regions are fairly safe from tornadoes, others are susceptible to them. Communities in tornado-prone areas try to mitigate their risk. For instance, they establish public warning systems.



## Independent Practice

For numbers 1–4, use context clues to answer the questions about each paragraph.

The wind velocity, or speed of motion, in a violent tornado can reach 300 miles per hour. The effects of such a storm can be catastrophic, killing people and destroying wildlife. Within as little as a few seconds, a tornado can devastate a town in its path.

**1** What does the word velocity mean in the paragraph?

- A** position
- B** change in direction
- C** swiftness
- D** size of something

**2** What does the word catastrophic mean in the paragraph?

- A** dynamic
- B** productive
- C** tragic
- D** plentiful

### Answer Form

1 (A) (B) (C) (D)

2 (A) (B) (C) (D)

3 (A) (B) (C) (D)

4 (A) (B) (C) (D)

Number  
Correct

4

When weather forecasters predict a tornado, it is advisable for people threatened by the storm to find safe shelter. If the storm destroys property, emergency workers will do their best to accommodate storm victims. For example, they will set up shelters for those who lost homes.

**3** What does the word accommodate mean?

- A** to provide with something needed
- B** to soothe and comfort
- C** to give necessary information
- D** to investigate in order to report on

**4** What words from the paragraph helped you figure out the meaning of accommodate?

- A** "When weather forecasters predict a tornado"
- B** "people threatened by the storm"
- C** "emergency workers will do their best"
- D** "set up shelters for those who lost homes"

# Determining Theme

Theme: *Teamwork*

You may read fiction for pleasure or entertainment. But did you know that most stories also provide lessons about life? These lessons are expressed through the **themes**, or messages, at the heart of what the author writes. Even your childhood stories have themes. For example, the story “Pinocchio” may have taught you the important lesson about honesty.

To identify a theme, connect ideas conveyed through the story’s setting, plot, and characters.

**Study the image and caption below. Think about the message being conveyed.**



A blind runner and his guide approach the finish line during a paralympic event in Malaysia.

**Now, suppose the people in the picture are characters in a story. Consider what they are doing. Circle any details in the picture and caption that suggest a message or life lesson.**

Read the chart below to see how analyzing details can help you determine a theme.

Character Details	Setting Details	Action Details	Theme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>one sighted runner, acting as a guide</li> <li>one blind runner who wants to be in a race</li> </ul>	a track and field event for people with disabilities	the two runners are approaching the finish line	No matter what obstacles they face, people can accomplish amazing things through teamwork.

Whether you read for pleasure, entertainment, or a school assignment, you can learn valuable lessons from stories. Thinking carefully about a story’s characters, setting, and plot—and how they work together—will help you figure out, or infer, the story’s theme.



**Read the beginning of a story about a boy named Holden and his grandfather.**

Genre: Realistic Fiction

## Holden and Pops *by Evan Gerlachen*

“When you’re at your grandfather’s after school, be sure to do something other than sit by yourself playing video games, Holden.”

“I know, Mom, but what else is there to do?” whined Holden, washing cereal bowls.

“Have you ever tried to show him one of your games? At least you’d be doing something together,” Mom suggested.

“Oh, Pops wouldn’t be interested,” Holden shrugged as they headed out to the car. “Plus he’d never catch on—you know how he is about big, scary technology.”

As Holden got out of the car, Mom tried once more. “You know, Pops might surprise you. Keep your options open. You might even ask him about ‘big, scary technology’ some time.” Holden puzzled over her words on the way into school.

(continued)

**Explore how to answer this question:** *“What do the details in this part of the story suggest about how people sometimes judge others?”*

In most stories, authors do not state a theme directly. To figure out an author’s message, you need to look for key details and see how they develop over the course of the text.

**Identify key details about each character’s attitudes and opinions. Then complete the chart below.**

Character	Comments About Pops	Attitude Toward Pops
Holden	Says Pops wouldn’t be interested in games and thinks technology is scary	
Mom	Suggests that Pops might be interested in video games and know something about technology	Seems to feel Pops is more interesting than Holden thinks

**With a partner, read aloud and act out the story’s beginning paragraphs. Then take turns explaining a theme, or lesson, that the author may be starting to develop in this part of the story.**





## Close Reading

On page 70, Holden doesn't want to spend time with Pops. On this page, **circle** words that tell how Holden's feelings change. Noticing how a character changes can help you understand a story's theme.

## Hint

Which choice helps explain why Holden's attitude toward Pops changes?

**Continue reading about Holden and Pops. Use the Close Reading and the Hint to help you answer the question.**

*(continued from page 70)*

That afternoon, Holden sat hunkered over his video game controller making vintage airplanes swoop across the screen.

"Whatcha doin', Son?" Pops asked.

"Just a game," Holden answered distractedly. Then, remembering Mom's advice, he made himself ask, "Wanna see?"

Pops settled next to Holden and immediately exclaimed, "Say, is that plane a Tomahawk? You know, she can go up to 20,000 feet to evade that enemy fighter."

Holden pivoted to gape in shock. Pops shrugged and said, "Didn't I ever tell you about the Tomahawk I flew in '41?"

**Circle the correct answer.**

Which statement best expresses the theme of the story?

- A** Strong family bonds can develop only through shared interests.
- B** People from different generations have little in common.
- C** Children should always listen to advice from their parents.
- D** Assuming things about people may stop us from really knowing them.



## Show Your Thinking

Look at the answer that you chose. Explain how specific text details helped you choose that answer.

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With a partner, list and discuss additional life lessons that this story teaches. Use text details about characters, setting, and plot to support your discussion.





Read the story. Use the Study Buddy and the Close Reading to guide your reading.



Being aware of a character's feelings and how they change may help me figure out the theme of this story. So I'm going to underline words at the beginning and end of the story that reveal Angie's feelings.

## Close Reading

Like many characters, Angie changes from the beginning to the end of the story. **Circle** text at the end of the story that reveals how she is different.

Look at the text you've underlined and circled. **Draw an X** next to the point in the story where it's clear that Angie has changed.

Genre: Realistic Fiction

## One Word of Advice by Charles Mills

- 1 Angie was worn out preparing for the school career fair, which was her brainchild and her responsibility. She'd spent hours researching companies, contacting executives, and making sure the school had the technological capability to handle state-of-the-art presentations. With three days to go, she whisked into the media center and greeted her friend with, "Karim, I've been multitasking like crazy, and I still can't imagine how I'll get everything done."
- 2 Karim leaned over and said, "Delegate. Plenty of friends have offered their help, and you need to take them up on it."
- 3 Angie winced and clutched her clipboard more tightly. Deep down she was certain she was the only person who could get everything right. But Karim grabbed Angie's clipboard from her and flipped through the pages. "So. What seems most overwhelming to you?"
- 4 Angie groaned and sighed. Then she responded, "I'm not really sure how to evaluate the server's capabilities or the sound system's amplitude, and I don't know when I'm going to put together the introductory video."
- 5 Karim nodded, pulled a few pages out of the stack, and penciled names on each one. Then he handed them to Angie, and said, "I know people. Now delegate."
- 6 On the day of the fair, Angie looked as if she were having the time of her life when Karim saw her.
- 7 "Oh, Karim, did you see Danny's introductory video? Wasn't it fantastic? I could never have come up with that myself," she gushed. Angie realized that she needed to give credit where credit was due.
- 8 "From now on, call me Angie the Delegator; the best thing I ever did was hand that clipboard to you!"



## Hints

Which sentence matches the author's description of Angie's actions and attitudes?

Which sentence describes Angie's attitude at the end of the story?

Which details best support the important theme of the story?

Use the Hints on this page to help you answer the questions.

- 1 At the beginning of the story, what is Angie's attitude?
  - A She is frustrated by the lack of help she gets from her friends.
  - B She trusts only Karim for reliable help and advice.
  - C She thinks she's the only one competent to organize the event.
  - D She is glad to be part of a team working on a project.
- 2 Which of the following sentences best describes an important theme about responsibility as described in "One Word of Advice"?
  - A A strong leader bravely faces all challenges.
  - B Good leaders trust others to do good work.
  - C Seeking help is the last resort of a real leader.
  - D People would rather give advice than lend a hand.
- 3 Select two pieces of evidence from "One Word of Advice" that support the correct answer to question 2. Check the boxes of your two choices.
  - ☐ "which was her brain child and her responsibility"
  - ☐ "'I've been multitasking like crazy'"
  - ☐ "the only person who could get everything right"
  - ☐ "'I could never have come up with that myself'"
  - ☐ "'how to evaluate the server's capability or the sound system's amplitude'"
  - ☐ "'the best thing I ever did was hand that clipboard to you'"



Read the story. Then answer the questions that follow.

## from “The Canoe Breaker”

*by Margaret Bemister*

1 Once in a certain tribe there was a young man who had no name. For it was the law in that tribe that every youth had to do some deed that would give to him his name. This young man had tried in many ways to do something that would make the chief tell him that he was a great warrior. Several times he had tried to kill a bear, but had failed. He had gone forth in battle, hoping to kill some powerful enemy, but no one had fallen under his tomahawk. He had gone on long hunting trips, hoping to bring home the skin of some wild animal, but had always returned empty-handed. So his brave, young heart felt very sad, for the young men of the tribe laughed at him for not having won a name for himself.

2 One summer day, the tribe left their camp on the lake shore and went back among the hills on a hunting trip. After they had gone some distance, the young man left the others and wandered off by himself, hoping that this time he would kill some animal, and so be no longer scorned by his companions. He tramped for many hours through the forest and over the hills, without catching sight of anything. At length, he climbed one hill which was higher than the others, and from here he could see the small creek which flowed through the hills down to the lake. As he was looking at it, he thought he saw some dark objects along the shore of the creek. They seemed about the size of canoes. He scanned the hills anxiously, and at length could see a band of Indians making their way along the trail made by the hunters in the morning.

3 At once the young man knew there was great danger ahead, for these Indians, the Shuswaps, were the enemies of his tribe and now were following their trail, and when they found them, they would kill them. Quickly the young man made his way down the hill, and through the forest to the spot where the hunters had camped for their evening meal. Running up to them, he cried, “Return at once to your lodges. Our enemies are now on our trail. They are in the forest on the other side of this hill. I shall return and delay them while you reach your lodges in safety.”

4 Then, without waiting for a reply, he turned and ran back in the direction from which he had come. By short cuts through the hills, he made his way to the creek and found, as he expected, that the Indians had left their canoes tied at its mouth. Seizing his tomahawk, he began to break the canoes, and soon had a hole made in all of them except one. Leaving the creek, he mounted the hill and from there could see the Shuswaps. He began to wave his arms and call wildly to attract their chief. At last they noticed him and began to make their way towards him. The young man was delighted, for now he knew that his tribe could escape in safety, while their enemies were returning towards the creek. Soon the Shuswaps neared the top of the hill, and he knew he must think of some plan to delay them here. Suddenly he dropped to the ground and lay there as though insensible. With a run the Shuswaps gained the summit and surrounded him. He lay face downwards with his arms stretched out. They turned him over on his back and peered into his face. Not a muscle moved; not even his eyelids quivered. Then the chief bent over him and felt his heart. “He [is not dead], he said, “but the Great Spirit has called his spirit to go on a long journey. . . . Let us place his body under the pine-trees, there to await the return of the spirit.”



5 The Indians lifted the body of the young man, carried it to a clump of pine-trees and laid it down. Then they walked some yards away and held a council.

6 As soon as they were a safe distance away, the young man jumped up. He ran down the hill, and reaching the canoes, jumped into the unbroken one and began to paddle down the creek.

7 The Shuswaps turned and saw him. With fierce cries, they began to race down the hillside, and when they arrived at the spot where they had left their canoes, and saw what had happened, they filled the air with their angry yells. The young man was now out on the lake in the canoe, and they were unable to follow him, as all the other canoes were wrecked. They ran angrily along the lake shore, thinking he would land on their side, but instead, he made his way across the lake to the other side.

8 When the young man reached the shore, he again seized his tomahawk, and this time broke the canoe with which he had saved his life. The defeated Shuswaps, standing on the shore, saw him do this, and again they filled the air with their angry yells. There was nothing for them to do but to return to their camp, while the young man made his way along the lake shore to the village of his tribe. When he reached there, he found that he was no longer a man without a name. His brave deed had won for him the name of Kasamoldin—the canoe breaker—and ever afterwards in his tribe, and to others, he was known by this name.

Answer the questions. Mark your answers to questions 1–3 on the Answer Form to the right.

**Answer Form**

1 (A) (B) (C) (D)

2 (A) (B) (C) (D)

3 (A) (B) (C) (D)

**Number  
Correct****3**

**1** A central theme of this story is that great deeds arise from seeing how to best use our unique strengths and abilities. Which sentence from the story **best** illustrates this theme?

- A** "He had gone forth in battle, hoping to kill some powerful enemy, but no one had fallen under his tomahawk."
- B** "Seizing his tomahawk, he began to break the canoes, and soon had a hole made in all of them except one."
- C** "The Indians lifted the body of the young man, carried it to a clump of pine-trees and laid it down."
- D** "There was nothing for them to do but to return to their camp, while the young man made his way along the lake shore to the village of his tribe."



**2** In what way does the plot contribute to the theme?

- A** The young man must decide on a name that reveals his special skills.
- B** The chief of the Shuswaps appreciates the young man for what he is.
- C** The young man doesn't give up until he proves he is a great warrior.
- D** The young man finally achieves success in a nontraditional way.

**3** Which of the young man's character traits **best** helps to convey the theme?

- A** the courage he shows in a dangerous situation
- B** his physical strength in breaking the canoes
- C** his determination to earn a name for himself
- D** his fear when confronted by the Shuswaps

**4** Explain how the author develops the theme over the course of "The Canoe Breaker." In your answer, include at least **two** details from different parts of the story.

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**Self Check**

***Go back and see what you can check off on the Self Check on page 52.***



Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

# The Battle Picnic

*by Jonas Sellers*

- 1 [Scene: a well-furnished drawing room in a fancy Washington D.C. home, July 16, 1861.]
- 2 MANFRED [Excitedly.] Well, the war with the Confederates has finally begun! We are determined to march to Richmond, and we will certainly overcome those rebels before the month has ended. Our victory will be swift, and the rebels will learn that they should not have unleashed Pandora's box with their traitorous ways.
- 3 JENNY [Distressed.] I believed that the war had already started in April, when the Confederate soldiers fired boldly on Fort Sumter. Surely that was an easy victory for them, and thankfully no one was killed on either side. But with all the volunteers President Lincoln gathered, why would the Confederate forces try to attack us now? I have heard officials say that our display of strength would frighten the Confederates into submission. [Pausing briefly in thought.] I am anxious about beginning a war; surely, many people will be harmed by such a serious act.
- 4 MANFRED [With a knowing smile.] I believe, sister, that you are less worried about war in general than about the safety of your own dear brother. Do not waste a moment worrying on my account; we will reward those Southern soldiers with a hearty beating, bring the black sheep back into the Union, and be at restful, even boring, peace again before you notice I am gone. By fighting, we will show our strength and our well-deserved confidence because we are battling on the proper side.
- 5 JENNY When must you leave?
- 6 MANFRED I came to say farewell, dear sister, as we march as soon as we are gathered. [Manfred walks over to the window and looks out.] Look at all the fine and fancy carriages filled with townspeople, determined to travel the road with our troops. What a stirring show of public support!
- 7 JENNY [Joining him at the window.] What can they be thinking of, to so merrily follow troops into battle?
- 8 MANFRED They are thinking that the battle will offer rewarding entertainment. They are thinking they will see our troops easily march to victory, just as I am thinking.
- 9 [Scene: July 21, 1861, along the Bull Run River, near Manassas Junction; there is a mass of confusion, with sightseers grabbing baskets and jumping into carriages; soldiers running toward the road heading back to Washington, and many soldiers dead and dying on the battlefield.]
- 10 JENNY [Totally distraught, staring toward the field.] Father, where is Manfred? Can you see Manfred anywhere on the battlefield?
- 11 MR. BENJAMIN [Demandingly.] Manfred will have to take care of himself. Sit down and get settled now, quickly as you can. The road is already filled to overflowing with panicky people.
- 12 JENNY Father, this is the most horrifying experience of my life. Why did we come? Why did so many people come, to picnic at a battle?

**Go On**

- 13 MR. BENJAMIN [Squarely facing Jenny.] Look at the growing hoards of Confederate soldiers, advancing so quickly. Our troops are fleeing off the field like bats from hell, hurrying back toward Washington, dropping their goods and guns so that they can run even faster.
- 14 JENNY I do not think they are cowards, Father. Who would stand at such a show of force?
- 15 MR. BENJAMIN We must go. We can talk later. Before long, the Confederates will be chasing us back to Washington, and who could imagine what might happen if they were to apprehend us?
- 16 JENNY I knew we should not have come!
- 17 MR. BENJAMIN Yes, I see that now.
- 18 JENNY [Solemnly.] I hope that Manfred makes it home safely. I hope . . . but I am not at all certain.
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**6** This question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

**Part A**

What is one central theme of “The Battle Picnic”?

- A** It is unrealistic to believe that wars are not deadly.
- B** Believing you can win is more important than actually winning.
- C** One’s attitude toward an event will affect the outcome of that event.
- D** It is important to stay calm during times of crisis.

**Part B**

Select **three** pieces of evidence that support the answer to part A.

- A** “I believed that the war had already started in April, when the Confederate soldiers fired boldly on Fort Sumter.”
- B** “I came to say farewell, dear sister, as we march as soon as we are gathered.”
- C** “What can they be thinking of, to so merrily follow troops into battle?”
- D** “Manfred will have to take care of himself. Sit down and get settled now, quickly as you can. ”
- E** “ . . . there is a mass of confusion, with sightseers grabbing baskets and jumping into carriages; soldiers running toward the road heading back to Washington, . . . ”
- F** “Father, this is the most horrifying experience of my life. Why did we come? Why did so many people come, to picnic at a battle?”
- G** “We must go. We can talk later.”

**7**

Which details from “The Battle Picnic” **best** support the inference that the characters do not fully understand their situation? Select all that apply.

- A** Almost everyone is excited about a picnic on the battlefield.
- B** The Union soldiers are preparing to march on the Confederate capital of Richmond.
- C** Manfred says he and the other Union soldiers will overcome the Confederates before the month has ended.
- D** People decide to leave the battle region as quickly as possible once the Confederates take control.
- E** The people fleeing the battle are afraid they will be attacked by the advancing Confederate soldiers.

**8**

Read these sentences from “The Battle Picnic.”

Do not waste a moment worrying on my account; we will reward those Southern soldiers with a hearty beating, bring the black sheep back into the Union, and be at restful, even boring, peace again before you notice I am gone. By fighting, we will show our strength and our well-deserved confidence because we are battling on the proper side.

What do you learn about Manfred’s character by what he says?

- A** He believes battle is more exciting than daily life.
- B** He cares for his sister so much that he does not want to frighten her.
- C** He does not want to fight but he feels he must do so for his country.
- D** He does not care that his sister is concerned for his safety.

**9**

When Manfred states in “The Battle Picnic” that he is battling on the “proper side,” what does the word “proper” suggest?

- A** Manfred is certain that his side will win.
- B** Manfred believes he is the only person able to behave in a correct manner.
- C** Manfred views the war as necessary.
- D** Manfred believes his side is supported by the forces of justice.

***Go On***



10

What is the effect of Manfred's comment in "The Battle Picnic" that he will be back before Jenny notices he is gone?

- A** It creates a break in the tension of the passage because the audience knows that Manfred is using humor in his response to Jenny.
- B** It creates a sense of dread since the audience knows that Manfred's prediction of a quick and easy victory is incorrect.
- C** It causes the audience to share Jenny's sense of fear because the audience can tell Manfred is lying on purpose.
- D** It causes the audience to share Jenny's anger because the audience knows that Jenny has begged Manfred not to go to war.

11

At the beginning of the play, Manfred says, "Our victory will be swift, and the rebels will learn that they should not have unleashed Pandora's box with their traitorous ways." Read this telling of the Greek myth "Pandora's Box."

#### Pandora's Box

Long ago, the god Zeus was angry with two brothers named Epimetheus and Prometheus. Zeus, who was the most powerful of all the gods, had a plan to get even. He ordered another god, Hephaestus, to make a very beautiful woman out of clay. This woman, Pandora, was sent to Earth by Zeus to marry Epimetheus. As a wedding gift, Zeus gave Pandora a box but made her promise never to open it.

Pandora was very curious by nature, and after resisting for as long as she could, she finally opened the box. Out flew all the horrors and evils of the world—hate, disease, misery, poverty, envy, and more—which Zeus had hidden away in the box. Frightened by all the evil rushing out, Pandora quickly closed the lid, not realizing that there was one thing still trapped inside. That thing was hope.

What does Manfred suggest through his reference to Pandora's box? Use details from both "The Battle Picnic" and "Pandora's Box" in your answer.

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Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

# The Gift of the Flute

*a Brule Sioux legend  
retold by Isabella Stroud*

1 Long ago, in the land of the Sioux, there was a time before the People had flutes. They had drums made of wood and animal hide, and rattles made of gourd; but they had no flutes, for they had never seen or heard one.

2 One day, a young hunter left his village to follow the fresh tracks of an elk. He carried with him a new wooden bow and a deerskin quiver holding arrows carved of wood, with fine feathers and flint stone arrowheads as sharp as glass. Into the mountains he followed the tracks of the elk, who remained always just out of sight, so that the hunter never caught a glimpse of him. The elk's tracks led deep into a forest—where, as night fell, both they and the elk disappeared.

3 As darkness filled the woods, the moon did not rise, and the hunter was forced to admit that until daybreak he was lost. He ate a little of the wasna—dried meat, mixed with berries and fat—that he carried in his deerskin pouch, and followed the sound of water to a cold stream, from which he drank. Then he wrapped himself in his fur robe and tried to sleep. But the night sounds of the forest were ones of animals calling, and owls hooting, and trees groaning, and instead of sleeping the hunter lay wakefully listening. The more he listened, the more he heard, until he realized that he was hearing a sound he had never heard before. It was a sound of wind—though not only of wind—and it was strangely lovely, yet dry and mournful, like the whistle of a ghost. And it was somewhat frightening. With a shiver, the hunter gathered his robe closer about him and took a long, long time to fall asleep.

4 When the hunter awoke with the sun, he looked up and saw wagnuka, the redheaded woodpecker, on a branch of the tree under which he had slept. The bird flitted to another tree, and to another, each time looking back as if to say, “Follow!” Again the hunter heard the lovely, strange sound of the night before, and he took up his bow and quiver and followed the woodpecker from tree to tree through the forest, until the bird came to a great cedar. There it paused on one hollow, slender branch, and began hammering with its beak at holes it had pecked in the wood. When the wind entered the holes the woodpecker had carved, the branch whistled with the lovely, strange sound. “Kola—friend,” said the hunter to the woodpecker, “permit me to take this branch back to my people!”

5 So the hunter returned to his village with no elk meat, but instead with the first flute: a gift of the tree, of the wind, of the bird, and of one who had learned how to listen.

**Go On**

**Part A**

Which of the following sentences **best** states a central theme of the story?

- A** Taking time to understand nature can lead to rewarding friendships with plants and animals.
- B** It is generally better to settle for something unimportant than to leave empty-handed.
- C** If people remain motivated and focused, they can accomplish any goal that they set out to.
- D** If people are not too focused on what they think they want, they can find unexpected surprises.

**Part B**

Which sentence from the story **best** supports the answer to part A?

- A** "Into the mountains he followed the tracks of the elk, who remained always just out of sight, so that the hunter never caught a glimpse of him."
- B** "The more he listened, the more he heard, until he realized that he was hearing a sound he had never heard before."
- C** "When the hunter awoke with the sun, he looked up and saw wagnuka, the redheaded woodpecker, on a branch of the tree under which he had slept."
- D** "Again the hunter heard the lovely, strange sound of the night before, and he took up his bow and quiver and followed the woodpecker from tree to tree through the forest, until the bird came to a great cedar."
- E** "So the hunter returned to his village with no elk meat, but instead with the first flute: a gift of the tree, of the wind, of the bird, and of one who had learned how to listen."

**7**

Which sentence from the story **best** explains why the hunter has to stay in the woods overnight?

- A** "One day, a young hunter left his village to follow the fresh tracks of an elk."
- B** "Into the mountains he followed the tracks of the elk, who remained always just out of sight, so that the hunter never caught a glimpse of him."
- C** "As darkness filled the woods, the moon did not rise, and the hunter was forced to admit that until daybreak he was lost."
- D** "But the night sounds of the forest were ones of animals calling, and owls hooting, and trees groaning, and instead of sleeping the hunter lay wakefully listening."

**8**

Based on evidence from the text, which words below **best** describe the hunter? Select all that apply.

- A** curious
- B** cold-hearted
- C** respectful
- D** foolhardy
- E** careful
- F** cheerful

**9**

The author begins the fourth paragraph with the words "When the hunter awoke with the sun." How does this choice of words affect the tone of the story?

- A** The words further develop the frightening tone because the hunter is too scared to notice the sun.
- B** The words create a surprising tone because the reader expected the hunter to sleep into the afternoon.
- C** The words create a light tone to contrast with the mysterious tone of the previous paragraph.
- D** The words create a humorous tone because the hunter is now amused by his fear.

***Go On***

**10**

Which of these **best** summarizes the plot of this story?

- A** A Sioux hunter follows an elk into a forest. The elk stays too far ahead of him, so the hunter loses sight of the elk. The hunter decides to stay the night in the forest and look for the elk in the morning. When he wakes up, the hunter cannot find the elk. The hunter walks home and finds a flute on the way. He plays it for his people.
- B** A Sioux hunter follows an elk into a forest, and then night falls. Realizing it's too dark to get home, he lies down and listens to the sounds of the forest. He hears an unusual sound, and in the morning, he follows it to find a woodpecker who makes a flute. With permission from the woodpecker, the hunter takes the gift to his people.
- C** A Sioux hunter foolishly follows an elk into the forest. He lies down to fall asleep but is kept awake all night by the sounds of animals and trees. He also hears an unusual sound which frightens him because he is a coward. When he wakes up in the morning, he sees a woodpecker putting holes in some trees. This gives him an idea to make a flute.
- D** A Sioux hunter follows an elk into a forest until it gets dark. Then, he stays the night in the forest but is too worried about finding the elk to get any sleep. He hears the wind, the trees, and the animals of the forest. All the noises are very loud and frighten the hunter. He is given a flute on the way home.

**11**

Below are three inferences about the passage.

<b>Inference</b>	The people of the story placed a high value on music.
	The hunter is in tune with the nature surrounding him.
	For the hunter, the flute's sound carries deep emotion.

Circle one of the inferences. Then cite two lines from the passage that help support this inference.

Line 1: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Line 2: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

A student is writing a report about Christopher Columbus. Read the following paragraphs from two of the student's sources. Then answer the questions that follow.

## Article 1

Christopher Columbus was one of the most brilliant navigators in history. In 1492, he “sailed the ocean blue,” heading west from Spain and into the unknown. On October 12, he sighted land in the Caribbean Sea. He didn’t know it at the time, but he had discovered a part of the world Europeans did not know existed. He created a small settlement and then, on a second voyage in 1494, founded a Spanish colony. Four years later, he sailed south, exploring the northern coast of South America. Most importantly, Columbus found a reliable sailing route from Europe to America. He did what no man before him had done, and so changed the world forever.

## Article 2

Christopher Columbus changed the world—for the worse. The consequence of his adventures was the deaths of millions of men, women, and children living in the Americas. How did this happen? Before Columbus, Europe and the Americas had long been separated. There had been no contact of any kind for hundreds of thousands of years. Then Columbus and his followers arrived. They brought with them new people, new plants and animals, and new diseases. This so-called Columbian Exchange led to 95 percent of all Native Americans living in Central and South America dying of disease. And those who did not die of disease were made slaves by men like Columbus. Columbus knew how to sail, but his skills brought only disaster.

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**35** Which is the best summary of Article 1?

- A** Christopher Columbus was a great navigator both for discovering America and finding a sailing route from Europe.
- B** Christopher Columbus created a small settlement in the Caribbean and sailed around the northern coast of South America.
- C** Christopher Columbus changed the world by making several voyages and establishing a Spanish colony.
- D** Christopher Columbus was the first man to discover a way of sailing easily from Europe to the Americas.
- E** Christopher Columbus was important because, in sailing to America, he discovered an unknown part of the world.

**36**

Which statement from Article 2 could the student quote to explain the meaning of “Columbian Exchange”?

- A** “Before Columbus, Europe and the Americas had long been separated.”
- B** “There had been no contact of any kind for hundreds of thousands of years.”
- C** “They brought with them new people, new plants and animals, and new diseases.”
- D** “And those who did not die of disease were made slaves by men like Columbus.”

**37**

Article 1 is organized sequentially, and Article 2 has a cause-effect organization. How can the student explain why those structures are appropriate for the arguments the authors are making?

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**STOP**

# Tools for Instruction

## Determine Theme

Fictional texts usually convey a theme—an insight into life developed through characters, events, and setting. In more mature works, theme tends to go beyond a simple, concrete lesson to a relatively complex and more abstract understanding about human values. Close reading will help students analyze how an author conveys theme over the course of a text; however, weakness in any of the higher-level skills involved in this process—making inferences, summarizing, and analyzing character, for example—will pose a greater challenge. Help students understand that statements of theme are often universal messages they can apply to other texts or to their own experiences. Then teach them how to trace the development of theme in a text, and provide questions that guide them to use textual evidence, rather than their own opinions, to support a statement of theme.

## Three Ways to Teach

### Establish What Theme Is and Is Not 20–30 minutes

To teach students how to determine and analyze theme, begin by clarifying what theme is and what it is not.

- Display a main idea sentence and a statement of theme based on a recent class text. The following example is based on *Dragonwings*, by Laurence Yep.

As Moon Shadow makes a new home in America, friends become like family.  
Family extends beyond bloodlines.

- Use questions such as these to help students distinguish important characteristics about theme statements.

*Which sentence includes key details from the story? (the first one)*  
*What important thing did Moon Shadow learn about friends? (they can be like family)*  
*Which sentence could be applied to other texts and our own lives? (the second one)*

- Identify the second sentence as a statement of theme, and help students distinguish how the sentences are different. Then have students briefly work in small groups to define *statement of theme* based on the class discussion. Guide them to understand that a statement of theme is a message about life that is developed through a work's characters, events, and setting.
- Repeat the previous exercise with new examples to reinforce what a statement of theme is and is not. As you identify statements of theme, add them to a chart like the following to serve as a reference.

Text	Statement of Theme	Not a Statement of Theme
<i>Dragonwings</i> by Laurence Yep	Family extends beyond bloodlines.	As Moon Shadow makes a new home in America, friends become like family.
"Eleven" by Sandra Cisneros (from <i>Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories</i> )	The pain of humiliation can be hard to heal.	Mrs. Price makes Rachel wear the ugly sweater.
<i>A Wrinkle in Time</i> by Madeleine L'Engle	There is great power in love.	Meg realizes that IT does not have the ability to love.

- Emphasize that theme is a statement, not a topic, and that statements of theme do not include specific details from the text. Additionally, statements of theme are subjective and can be stated in different ways.



## Trace the Development of Theme 20–30 minutes

To help students determine theme, provide them with question prompts they can use to help them analyze plot components, make inferences, and draw relevant connections to their own lives.

- Say, *Authors convey themes through details about characters, events, and setting.* To demonstrate this point, model identifying a detail in the text students are currently reading to explore the development of theme. See the following example.

*Who are the main characters? What do they do that helps me understand the theme? At the beginning of this short story, Juan says his neighbor Mr. Foley is always busy in his garden. Juan says Mr. Foley tends to his flowers like children, carefully pulling even the smallest of weeds. I am going to pay attention to this detail about how Mr. Foley cares for his garden. I think the author might want me to learn something from that.*

- Then have students work in small groups to answer the following questions. Explain that thinking about their answers will help them trace the development of theme in the text.

### Identify Plot Components

*Who are the main characters?*

*Where and when does the story take place?*

*What problem did a character want to solve?*

*What did the character do to solve the problem?*

*What happened as a result of the character's actions?*

*Was the problem resolved?*

### Make Inferences

*Why does the character say/do \_\_\_\_\_?*

*What does the character learn when \_\_\_\_\_?*

*What does the author want readers to know about \_\_\_\_\_?*

### Relate to Real-Life Situations

*Would you have resolved the problem differently? Why not/How so?*

*What did a character learn that applies to your own life?*

*In what situations would it be easy to apply that theme to real life?*

*In what situations would it be difficult to apply that theme to real life?*

- Bring students back together to discuss their answers. Review how the author conveyed the theme over the course of the text.
- Point out that texts often convey more than one theme. Some may be minor themes, while others will emerge over the course of a text as major themes.

**Support English Learners** Students' understanding of particular themes may be influenced by their cultural background. Integrate culturally relevant literature into class readings to provide a familiar base from which to explore theme and to broaden all students' cultural awareness.

## Respond to a Statement of Theme 30–45 minutes

**Connect to Writing** To help students meaningfully engage with statements of theme, have them take a position of agreement or disagreement with a theme from their reading. Display several statements of theme from one or more recent texts. Have students choose one theme and decide whether they agree or disagree with it. Then have them write a brief essay defending their position. Provide guidelines such as these to help students develop a strong response.

Take a clear stand: Do you agree or disagree?

Support your view with evidence from your experiences and observations.

Evidence may also come from what you have learned from other readings.

Identify key words in the statement. Repeating these in your writing can help you stay on topic.

## Check for Understanding

If you observe...	Then try...
difficulty recognizing the underlying meaning in a selection	reviewing metaphor. Explain that sometimes the events in a text are meant to be symbolic of bigger ideas. Revisit some of Aesop's fables and work with students to determine how the characters and their actions are really metaphors for bigger ideas.
confusion about how to form a statement of theme	scaffolding with choices for possible themes. Work with students to point to evidence in the text that leads readers to one or the other. Help students articulate why the incorrect choices are not the best choices.